

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCLANT

USCINCEUR

USLOSACLANT

USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T USNATO 4356

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, NL

SUBJECT: PROPOSED REDUCTIONS IN NETHERLANDS ARMED FORCES

REF: USNATO 2005

1. THERE FOLLOWS BELOW THE TEXT OF A LETTER DATED AUGUST 14, 1975,
FROM THE NETHERLANDS ACTING PERMREP (BUWALDA) TO ACTING SYG
PANSA, CONCERNING PROPOSED FORCE REDUCTIONS.

BEGIN TEXT:

YOU WILL RECALL THAT THE CONSULTATIONS ON THE NETHERLANDS DEFENSE
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PLAN 1974-1983 WERE TERMINATED IN THE DPC MEETING ON 20TH APRIL
1975 BY THE DPC ENDORSING THE MILITARY COMMITTEE'S LAST ASSESSMENT
OF THE PROPOSED FUTURE STRUCTURE OF THE NETHERLANDS ARMED FORCES
(MCM-2-75) AS WELL AS THE REVIEW OF THIS ASSESSMENT CONTAINED IN

PO/75/18. FURTHERMORE THE DEFENSE PLANNING COMMITTEE NOTED THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REVISED NETHERLANDS DEFENCE PLAN AND OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE WOULD BE MONITORED BY THE EXISTING NATO DEFENCE REVIEW PROCEDURES.

IN THE COURSE OF THE RECENT PREPARATION OF THE NETHERLANDS STATE BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 1976 AND THE PLANNING FIGURES FOR THE FOLLOWING YEARS, HOWEVER, VERY SERIOUS SHORTFALLS APPEARED ON A QUITE UNPRECEDENTED SCALE IN THE RECEIPTS PREVIOUSLY CALCULATED.

THESE SHORTFALLS ARE DUE TO THE PRESENT ECONOMIC SITUATION, WITH ITS HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE WHICH CALLS FOR COSTLY SPECIAL MEASURES TO CURB FURTHER INCREASES.

CONSEQUENTLY MY GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN FORCED TO MAKE DRASTIC REDUCTIONS

IN THE BUDGETS OF ALL GOVERNMENTAL DEPARTMENTS, INCLUDING THAT OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE. ALL THE MEASURES ENVISAGED BY THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE INCORPORATED IN THE DRAFT BUDGET WHICH WILL BE PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT IN THE COURSE OF NEXT MONTH. THE DEBATES ON THE DEFENCE BUDGET IS EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE BY THE END OF OCTOBER.

AS A RESULT, TWO MEASURES ARE PLANNED WHICH DIRECTLY WILL INFLUENCE THE CAPABILITY OF THE ROYAL NETHERLANDS NAVY. FIRSTLY, IT IS PLANNED TO DECOMMISSION AND DISPOSE OF 15 NEPTUNE LONG RANGE MARITIME PATROL AIRCRAFT, OF WHICH 13 ARE ASSIGNED (MC 57/3, AS AMENDED BY CORRIGENDUM NO. 4(A)) TO NATO, ON THE FIRST OF JANUARY 1976. REPLACEMENT PLANS HAVE BEEN POSTPONED.

SECONDLY IS IT IS PLANNED TO DECOMMISSION AND DISPOSE OF THE AGEING GUIDED MISSILE CRUISER "DE ZEVEN PROCINCIE" IN SEPTEMBER 1975 AND THEREFORE WELL BEFORE THE NEW GUIDED MISSILE FRIGATES ENTER INTO SERVICE.

IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE ABOVE MEASURES CONSTITUTE AN IMPORTANT QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE CHANGE IN THE NETHERLANDS CONTRIBUTION TO NATO-DEFENCE AND MOREOVER THAT THE FINAL DECISIONS IN THIS MATTER
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HAVE TO BE TAKEN WITH SUCH URGENTLY, THAT THE NORMAL ANNUAL REVIEW PROCEDURES ARE RENDERED IMPRACTICABLE, THE NETHERLANDS GOVERNMENT REQUEST TO SET IN MOTION THE CONSULTATION PROCEDURE IN ACCORDANCE WITH C-M(55)82 (FINAL).

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE WILL BE INFORMED OF THE ABOVE BY A LETTER OF THE NETHERLANDS PERMANENT MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE, WITH A VIEW OF HAVING A MILITARY OPINION AVAILABLE IN TIME FOR A DPC-MEETING IN SEPTEMBER.

I AM SENDING COPIES OF THIS LETTER TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE DEFENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE AS WELL AS TO THE ACTING CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE. END TEXT.

2. MISSION COMMENT. DATE OF DPC MEETING CITED IN FIRST PARAGRAPH OF BUWALDA LETTER WAS APRIL 10, NOT APRIL 20. WE ARE SKEPTICAL THAT THE GON WAS "SURPRISED SUDDENLY" BY THE APPEARANCE OF "VERY SERIOUS SHORTFALLS...ON A QUITE UNPRECEDENTED SCALE IN THE RECEIPTS PREVIOUSLY CALCULATED." WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY INFORMATION AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE COULD PROVIDE ON THIS, AS WELL AS ANY INFORMATION AS HOW THE GON HAS APPORTIONED "DRASTIC" BUDGET REDUCTIONS AMONG THE VARIOUS GOVERNMENTAL DEPARTMENTS. THE BRIEFING THE NETHERLANDS GAVE TO THE DPC ON MAY 21, 1974 (USNATO 2826, DTG 212205Z MAY 74) SHOWED DUTCH PLANS TO DECOMMISSION THE "DE ZEVEN PROVINCIE" IN JULY 1977, PRIOR TO REPLACEMENT BY AN "ADAPTED" STANDARD TYPE FRIGATE IN 1984. REGARDING MPA, THE BRIEFING STATED: "THE REPLACEMENT OF THE NEPTUNE AIRCRAFT...WILL UNFORTUNATELY BE LATER THAN DESIRABLE FROM AN OPERATIONAL POINT OF VIEW." MCM-38-74, DATED JUNE 10, 1974, CONTAINED THE FOLLOWING COMMENT ON THESE PLANS: "THE MILITARY COMMITTEE ALSO FEELS CONCERN ABOUT PLANNED DECOMMISSIONING OF THE GUIDED MISSILE CRUISER PRIOR TO REPLACEMENT BECAUSE OF THE RESULTING DEGRADATION OF THE AIR DEFENSE OF ASW GROUPS. FURTHERMORE, THE MILITARY COMMITTEE NOTES WITH CONCERN THE DELAYED REPLACEMENT OF NEPTUNE LONG RANGE MARITIME PATROL AIRCRAFT WHICH WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY RESULT IN A SERIOUS GAP IN ALLIED SURVEILLANCE AND ASW CAPABILITY FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE DECADE. IN VIEW OF THE DEPENDENCY OF ACE ON THE SEA LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS THE DELAYS IN REPLACEMENT AND MODERNIZATION ARE CONSIDERED TO BE OF MOST SERIOUS CONCERN. INDEED, SACLANT CONSIDERS HIS
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ABILITY TO CONTAIN THE SOVIET SUBMARINE THREAT IN THE EAST ATLANTIC WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY REDUCED." MCM-2-75, JANUARY 12, 1975, STATES THAT THE MC'S POSITION AS STATED IN MCM-38-74 REMAINS UNCHANGED. MCM-2-75 RECOMMENDS THAT THE NETHERLANDS AUTHORITIES BE URGED "TO CONSIDER THE SPEEDING-UP OF THE MODERNIZATION AND REPLACEMENT PROGRAM OF THEIR MARITIME FORCES, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE ASW CAPABILITY."

3. WE BELIEVE THAT, PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER DPC DISCUSSION, WE SHOULD LINE UP STRONG BILATERAL DEMARCHES TO GON BY OTHER ALLIES TO SUPPLEMENT TOUGH APPROACH WE RECOMMEND US TAKE TO STEM THESE CUTS WHICH COULD OPEN WAY TO FUTURE UNRAVELLING IN ALLIED DEFENSE POSTURE. END COMMENT. STREATOR

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